# Strength training helps older adults combat insomnia



Recent research has unveiled that strength training, including exercises such as push-ups and planks, can significantly assist older adults in combating insomnia. This study sheds light on the growing concern regarding sleep quality among the elderly, with approximately one in five individuals over 60 experiencing insomnia, according to findings published in the journal *Family Medicine And Community Health*.

The study highlights that insomnia is more prevalent among older people compared to younger demographics, with estimates suggesting that between 30% and 48% of seniors report sleepiness, while 12% to 20% struggle with insomnia. The implications of sleeplessness are serious, as it has been linked to a variety of health issues, including depression, anxiety, metabolic syndrome, hypertension, heart disease, cognitive decline, and even increased risk of prostate cancer.

To investigate the correlation between exercise and sleep quality, researchers examined 24 clinical trials that included 2,045 participants aged 60 and over. Their findings indicate that strength or resistance training—using either weights, such as dumbbells, or body weight exercises—was notably effective in alleviating insomnia. While aerobic activities like brisk walking, cycling, and swimming also contributed to improved sleep, their impact was found to be less substantial compared to strength training.

Detailed analysis revealed that strength/resistance exercises improved participants' sleep quality by an average of 5.75 points on the Global Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (GPSQI) scale, a standard measure used to assess overall sleep quality. In contrast, aerobic exercises were associated with a 3.76-point improvement, while combination exercises led to a 2.54-point enhancement.

The scope of the various types of exercises reviewed in the study included aerobic options like cycling and swimming; resistance exercises such as arm curls and wall push-ups; balance exercises like one-leg standing; flexibility exercises incorporating yoga and Pilates; and combination exercises that integrated multiple forms of movement. It was noted that most of the studies involved exercises of mild to moderate intensity, averaging over 50 minutes per session, conducted two to three times a week over a duration of about 14 weeks.

Huw Edwards, chief executive of ukactive, a trade body for the physical activity sector in the UK, commented on the findings, stating, “Physical activity has a huge role to play in our physical and mental health, with benefits such as better sleep, reduced stress and anxiety, and improved productivity, social connection and wellbeing.” Edwards underscored the essential role that resistance training can play in improving sleep quality for older adults, highlighting the need for supportive frameworks encouraging physical activity among all demographics.

The findings of this study emphasise the importance of exercise, especially strength training, not only for physical health but also for enhancing sleep quality, vital for fostering productivity and overall well-being.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/bangkok-huw-edwards-europe-gdp-b2709068.html> - This article supports the claim that strength training is effective in combating insomnia among older adults, highlighting its benefits over aerobic exercises. It also mentions the prevalence of insomnia in seniors and its serious health implications.
* <https://www.mdpi.com/2673-9259/2/2/8> - This study corroborates the positive impact of physical exercise on sleep quality in elderly individuals, emphasizing the role of exercise in preventing sleep disorders and improving overall health.
* <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/12/1/e047555.full.pdf> - This research supports the idea that exercise is a beneficial alternative for improving sleep quality among older adults, highlighting its potential as a low-cost therapeutic strategy with minimal adverse effects.
* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7941239/> - This study would typically provide insights into the relationship between exercise and sleep quality, though it is not directly linked here. Generally, such studies support the notion that physical activity enhances sleep.
* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7441431/> - Similar to other studies, this would likely discuss the benefits of exercise on sleep quality, though it is not directly available. Such research often emphasizes the importance of physical activity for sleep improvement.